



December 15, 2008

Contact: Bill Madison
(916) 263-1093

**Statement from David Kears, Vice Chair,
First 5 California State Commission**

Regarding Approval of Funding for Healthy Families to Extend Health Coverage to More Children

Today the First 5 California State Commission approved funding that will safeguard more than 65,000 infants and children ages 0 to 5 from being placed on waiting lists for health coverage through the fiscal year ending June 30, 2009.

First 5 California authorized funding up to \$16.7 million to pay health care premiums for children ages 0 to 5 who are new enrollees to the state's Healthy Families program. First 5 county commissions have committed to presenting their commissioners with requests to help provide part of this funding.

This funding will be offered to the California Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board (MRMIB), the agency that administers Healthy Families, which will consider this additional funding at its next meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 17.

The State Commission extends our sincere gratitude to the First 5 county commissions who stepped forward – ensuring Healthy Families does not have to close its doors to eligible young children as a result of the state's budget shortfall.

First 5 looks forward to working with MRMIB to keep young children off waiting lists for health coverage during this period of rising unemployment rates and economic instability.